like a house. She was fitted with an iron ram. She was indeed a novel and terrible engine of destruction. The Confederates gave her a new name, the *Virginia.*

On Saturday, March 8th, the *Merrimac,* for by this name she is generally known, came out of the harbor of Norfolk and at once made for the frigate *Congress* and the sloop-of-war *Cumberland.* These vessels were lying at anchor off Newport News. They were sailing vessels, excellent of their kind, well armed and equipped, and well officered and manned. The ironclad made short work of both of them. She rammed the *Cumberland,* making a large hole in her, so that she began steadily and rapidly to sink. While the doomed vessel was sinking, her officers and crew fought her with the greatest gallantry and obstinacy. But the shot from the *Cumberland* bounded off the sloping sides of the *Merrimac,* while the latter's more formidable battery soon covered the decks of her antagonist with the dead and dying. The *Cumberland* was fought till she sank, and she sank with her flag flying. The *Congress* was next attacked. Her invulnerable adversary for an hour and more, assisted by two gunboats, raked her fore and aft, and finally set fire to her so

that at last she blew up. She, too, was defended with the greatest heroism.

The news of these disasters caused throughout the North the liveliest feelings of apprehension and alarm. There was not, so people supposed, a vessel in the whole fleet capable of dealing with this dreadful and invulnerable foe. But, the very next